



ACME TOWNSHIP
NEW URBANISM CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 4, 2006, 1:00 p.m.
Acme Township Hall
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690

Meeting called to Order at 1:07 p.m.

Members present: M. Krakow , L. Craig (Co-Chairs), D. Krause, N. Veliquette
Ex-officio representatives A. Andres Sr., A. Andres Jr., L. Bussa,
L. Grant, S. Corpe

Members absent: J. Collins, T. Gokey, J. Goss, J. Icoangelli,
J. Lively, S. Nowakowski, D. Rohn, S. Smith

Staff present: N. Edwardson/Recording Secretary

Proposals have been received from UDA, RTKL and Wade Trim. Bob Gibbs stated that he would not be able to put together a proposal by the deadline and regretfully declines.

The committee is still on track to provide a recommendation to the Board of Trustees by February 7 meeting.

There had been hope of meeting with Mr. Gibbs between Christmas and New Year, but he did not call as expected to make arrangements. His message indicating he couldn't meet the deadline and did not request an extension. Corpe believes he would not have suspected it to be an option. Krause will call him to say that the township would still accept a proposal from him on or before January 9.

Krakow noted that the committee is still actively seeking grant funding for the project. Noelle Knopf, 5795 US 31 North, noted on the agenda that Rohn was expected to update the group today regarding a conversation with Rotary Charities. Rohn is unable to be here today. Veliquette has been looking at a variety of grant funding options primarily from a developer point of view. Many opportunities are keyed to pet projects of a foundation or other funding source. Rotary Charities may take a broad local land use planning support view, rather than focusing only on affordable housing or a narrow issue.

Krakow will ask Rohn for copies of letters sent to and received from potential funding sources for Friday. He has an extensive list of potential funding sources available.

Krakow reported that Senen Antonio from DPZ met with representatives of Meijer, Inc., The Village at Grand Traverse, LLC, and some downstate planners for an entire day on December 27. The history and nature of the situation in Acme Township were discussed at length in those meetings and in a two hour phone call with Krakow. Mr. Antonio seemed to Krakow to feel this is an interesting project in theory but that goals for the 450 acre project area are not yet well enough clarified. He seemed uncertain near the middle of the conversation as to how DPZ could assist and add value. By the end of the conversation, confirmed again half an hour ago, Mr. Antonio felt there is hope for the project and he will submit a proposal. He is currently in Mississippi.

The group felt that the three proposals received to date should be distributed for individual study by group members and discussion at Friday's meeting. Friday afternoon calls would be made to invite firms to interview. Proposals from DPZ and/or Mr. Gibbs should arrive no later than Tuesday midday. The group discussed holding a meeting Wednesday morning, January 11, at 9:00 a.m. to review further proposals. The Monday morning regular meeting will be cancelled.

Motion by Krause, Supported by Veliquette to hold a meeting at 1:00 p.m., Friday, January 6 and a meeting at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 11. Motion carried unanimously.

At the last meeting the group discussed preparation of a list of standardize questions to be asked of each applicant interviewed. Questions for consideration are welcome from any member of the committee or public. Krakow asked that people bring their proposed questions to Friday's meeting. All suggested questions will be considered, but it may be the case that not all would ultimately be used.

Invitations to interview will be made first by phone, with follow-up by letter. Krause felt that the committee should specify the times and dates when we are inviting them to appear. He thought each meeting would take a full day, including a formal presentation plus time for informal meetings with key players and site visits. Grant felt otherwise; that he has never participated in an interview lasting over two hours. Being available for other fact-finding and assistance is incidental. It was decided that the group will establish dates and times when interview slots will be available but maintain some flexibility.

Each proposal will be evaluated only in terms of itself; no minimum or maximum number of firms to interview will be set. A firm would only be eliminated if there is strong consensus of a lack of further interest. Interviews will be scheduled any time on or between January 16-30.

Bussa and Krakow both feel it would be highly beneficial for Dr. Johnson to meet with Krakow soon and in person. Bussa provided a history of Dr. Johnson's relationship with the township; in general Dr. Johnson feels that he has extended himself and a plan for his land to be a town center in the past but has been countered by the township at every turn. Ultimately focus for a town center has shifted away from his site. Due to the difficult past history he is far from avid about the project, yet he is still willing to participate cautiously. Whether the public and all the landowners can reach a mutually satisfying conclusion remains to be seen. Bussa feels that having Krakow make the effort to go to Dr. Johnson in California to meet would be a significant signal. The group should not expect any funding from Dr. Johnson for this initiative.

Bussa made mention, in reference to a potential mixed use development other than in Acme Village, that an agreement exists that such could not occur if it would have a detrimental financial impact on his property. Corpe observed that this statement likely refers to the opening paragraph of the Mixed Use Development Ordinance. There was debate about what that section meant, given how it is drafted, it could have meant MUDs could only exist in one geographical area or that they could exist anywhere that zoning would permit as long as they did not have a negative financial impact on the specified area. The ZBA subsequently ruled that the interpretation would be the latter.

Kurtz stated that he is looking forward to the Advisory's recommendation on February 7, and that they've been working hard. He stated that back in the fall there was a handshake agreement made between himself, representatives from VGT and Bussa that this initiative would move forward, that majority of landowner approval would be required to select a planner, and that the landowners would financially participate.

Andres, Sr., expressed concern about Goss not being at the last two meetings. He said Dr. Johnson was slapped in the face as well as the developers. He doesn't see any support now. He feels it is up to the three developers. He has a bad feeling. Krakow has had discussions with Goss, Nowakowski and Smith. There was no indication that they had withdrawn.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:50 p.m.